

# DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY

Shortly after the end of World War II, the United States military established schools for the children of its service men and women stationed in Europe and the Pacific. Schools for children of military members stationed at various bases in the United States were already well-established. These overseas and domestic schools were originally administered by the individual services, but as the number of schools grew, their administration was transferred to civilian managers. The schools were organized in two distinct but similar systems: the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS) overseas, and the Department of Defense Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS) in the United States. In 1994 the two systems united under the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA).

DoDEA operates 219 public schools in 19 districts located in seven states, Puerto Rico, Guam, and 13 foreign countries to serve the children of military service members and Department of Defense civilian employees. Approximately 102,600 students are enrolled in DoDEA schools, with approximately 71,100 students in the DoDDS system, and approximately 31,500 students in the DDESS system. DoDDS has approximately 11,700 employees and DDESS approximately 5,800 employees.



## **Demographics**

Children of enlisted military personnel represent 85 percent of the total enrollment in DoDEA schools; minority students account for 50 percent of the total enrollment. Approximately 80 percent of DoDEA students have parents that do not have a college degree, and approximately 50 percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. Because military assignments often result in frequent moves, the transient rate for DoDEA schools is 35 percent.

In the DDESS system, the parents/guardians of the majority of the students (60 percent) are affiliated with the Army. In the DoDDS system, approximately 35 percent of students have parents/guardians in the Army, and 29 percent have parents/guardians in the Air Force.

## **Assessment Systems**

DoDEA students take the Terra Nova Achievement Test, a norm-referenced test for students in grades 3 through 11, which rates their performance on whether students are learning what they are being taught. DoDEA students also take the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the “Nation’s Report Card,” which is the only continuing assessment of the nation’s students in various subject areas. NAEP provides state/jurisdiction comparisons of student achievement in reading, writing, math, and science. In addition to the Terra Nova and NAEP, DoDEA students take the DoDEA Writing Assessment, a hand-scored essay patterned from the National Writing Project.

DoDEA students continue to perform at a high achievement level on all of these tests. DoDEA students as a whole performed above the national average in the 2000 NAEP in Math, and well above the national average for the 2000 NAEP in Science. DoDEA Black and Hispanic students in both domestic and overseas schools scored at or near the top of the scoring scale for the 2000 Math assessment compared to their minority peers in other participating states and jurisdictions; on the 2000 Science assessment, their scores were the highest compared to their minority peers in other participating states and jurisdictions.

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